

Dragalevtsy. In general, though the division of labor was traditional, the specialization of occupation was increasing. Though unemployment was absent from the village, this in no way implied that all had the kind of work they wanted. It was astounding enough that even in times of world depression all did have a way of earning a living. 464

In Bulgaria, as in most countries, property passed from parent to child. There too the laws governing this transfer were very complicated. However, as a general principle in the villages sons inherited twice as much land as daughters. Usually the sons received equal amounts, but a father while still alive could divide the land, taking an equal share for himself, which he later gave to his favorite son. Quite often a sister said when the time of division arrived: "Why should I take land away from my brothers?" and forfeited her claim. In some cases she would sell her share of the estate cheaply to a favorite brother. If she was married, however, her husband could insist that she take what was her due and might even go to court to pursue the case. Every year there were a few Dragalevtsy people involved in long-drawn-out lawsuits originating over the division of inherited land. More often than not, lawyers' fees used up a great part of the value of the property. 428
593
[69] •

A heavy inheritance tax accompanied any such transfer of property from the father to his children. One man at work in the hayfield took time off to tell me of the arrangement being worked out in his family: 428
651

"Our father, who is still living, told us three brothers to divide his property equally among us. We have not made the division officially as yet, because if we did we would have to pay an inheritance tax amounting to about four hundred dollars. We divide the land by lot. We take strips of land, both meadows and fields of equal value, and draw lots for the strips. Of course, our father has kept some of the land for himself, but we shall divide that among the three of us after his death."

The most serious conflicts in the village arose when there was disagreement over the division of a patrimony. Brother turned against brother, and whole families became involved in the dispute. There 428
578

LAND, LABOR, AND MONEY

57

When I asked her if she and Dimitar had quarrels about other things, Zdravka answered:

578
685
422

"We don't quarrel for I keep quiet, and he only speaks to me 'between his teeth.'"

Poultry was a source of much ill feeling among neighbor women. Whenever a hen or rooster strayed into the garden next door there was apt to be a verbal battle, the effects of which fortunately wore off within a few days. There was one woman, however, who had not spoken to her next-door neighbor for three years because of harsh words uttered about a straying hen. "May her chickens be homeless," cursed the other person in describing the incident.

In case the women quarreled over such things as chickens, overhanging branches of a fruit tree, or the return of a borrowed article, the men were inclined to treat the whole incident lightly and speak of it as "woman's business." On the other hand, if two men had a serious dispute, their families behaved distantly toward each other, either because of actual antipathy or because of paternal command. From the standpoint of social interaction, therefore, a serious row between two men was more of a strain on the social structure than was a quarrel between two women. It was apt to last longer, involve more people, and have larger issues at stake. [562]

A visit to the village courtroom convinced me that money was also the basis for much misunderstanding. The court records were full of cases of men who had argued over financial matters until one of them haled the other into court. Most of these disputes were settled by the mayor, but many people left his courtroom still dissatisfied. Because the Dragalevtsy peasant was penurious, every lev was cherished and spent only when absolutely necessary. Such frugality was a virtue from one point of view, but it became a vice when it led to disruptive conflict.

691
578

This increased emphasis upon money permeated even the family relationships. One woman exclaimed:

"Relatives don't even lend sewing machines to one another without payment. I have a sister-in-law who has a machine, but she won't let my daughters use it unless I pay."

COURTSHIP AND WEDDING

83

The girls of Dragalevtsy had no way of proposing to a boy. The girl waited and, if nobody proposed to her, she remained unmarried.

583
562

Sometimes unmarried young people had sexual intercourse. If the boy did not want to marry the girl, then she told her parents; the boy was brought before the *Obshchina* and, if the charge was proved, was made to marry the girl. As one peasant said in matchless understatement: "In such cases they do not have a happy life."

836

One such case occurred during my sojourn in the village and was an exciting topic of conversation. A girl with an unsavory reputation, in the hope of gaining a certain young man as a husband, accused him of having had intimate relations with her; the parents, too, insisted upon his marrying their daughter. He refused and the matter was taken up before the village court, where several of his friends swore that they likewise had had intimate relations with the same girl. Whether the friends swore truthfully or falsely was still a matter of doubt in the minds of many villagers, but the young man was freed from all responsibility in the matter.

[69] ●

Chastity ranked high in the scale of village social values. Even though some couples had illicit relationships before they married, they were running a grave social risk. Public indignation was especially great in the case of illegitimacy. A girl giving birth to an illegitimate child was forced to leave the village. On this subject I had the following conversation with one of the more respected villagers:

848
836
558

"Where does the girl go if she is driven out of the village?"

"She goes to Sofia because she's a bad girl."

"Do the villagers try to find out who the father was and punish him for his part?"

"The father? Why should they? The girl is to blame, not the man."

"Are many illegitimate children born in the near-by villages?"

"In my time [the last thirty-five years] there have been two in Bistritsa, one in Dragalevtsy, and none in Simeonovo."

There was no particular stigma attached to being a widow or a widower, but the village mores decreed that, when remarrying, widows had to choose widowers, and vice versa. The explanation for this went back to the villagers' belief of the afterlife. They thought of

587
775

APPENDIX

243

TABLE 13

FREQUENCY OF TRIPS TO VILLAGES, MALE AND FEMALE FAMILY
HEADS, DRAGALEVTSY, 1934*

FREQUENCY	NUMBER		PER CENT	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
<i>Monthly:</i>				
6 times.....	2	0	0.8	0.0
5 times.....	0	2	0.0	0.8
4 times.....	2	4	0.8	1.6
3 times.....	3	2	1.2	0.8
2 times.....	8	9	3.1	3.5
1 time.....	68	52	26.4	20.3
<i>Yearly:</i>				
6 times.....	4	8	1.5	3.1
5 times.....	2	3	0.8	1.2
4 times.....	14	8	5.4	3.1
3 times.....	21	17	8.1	6.7
2 times.....	13	19	5.0	7.4
1 time.....	8	8	3.1	3.1
No times.....	113	124	43.8	48.4
Total.....	238	256	100.0	100.0

*Unreported: 11 males, 11 females.

Roughly speaking, about half of the family heads (men and women) do not go to other villages in the course of a year. For those who go, the greatest frequency of visitation is once a month.

Men born in Dragalevtsy visit the other villages more than do their fellow-villagers not born in Dragalevtsy; however, women born in Dragalevtsy visit less than those born outside.*

Children seldom go with their parents to other villages, though certain young men make numerous visits to parties during the year.

There are other contacts which the peasant makes with the outside world away from the village, but these are not important enough for separate consideration. There is, for instance, "the iron grip of the law." Since the mores of Dragalevtsy are still strictly observed, no criminals were led off to prison from the jail-less village during the three-year period in which I studied Dragalevtsy. Annually there are four or five lawsuits, involving about thirty people and taking on an average ten days' time for each person. For those

*Eighty-three per cent of the male family heads but only 55 per cent of the female heads were born in Dragalevtsy. The 45 per cent of non-native wives come from villages ranging in distance from two to ten miles.

691 involved, the trial is a big, important event, but the effect upon the village is slight. What does have an effect is the quarrel which leads to the lawsuit, but that is an internal and not an external matter.

THE "OUTSIDE WORLD" VISITS THE VILLAGE

609
369 1. THE MOUNTAIN AND THE MONASTERY. The "white-collar" people of Sofia are enthusiastic hikers. On sunny days, both winter and summer, they start out on an extended hike, usually in the direction of Vitosha, a majestic mountain which towers seven thousand feet above the Sofia plain. If very active, they climb to Hizha Aleko, the mountain hotel below the summit, there to spend the night. Or if interested only in a Sunday afternoon stroll of ten miles, they visit *God's Consecrated Spot on Vitosha*, a historic monastery from which they get a magnificent view of the Sofia plain, the city, and the Balkan peaks twenty miles to the north.

Dragalevtsy, hugging as it does a shoulder of the mountain, is on the main road leading from Sofia to the monastery (twenty minutes' walk above the village) and the mountain hotel far above the monastery. Dragalevtsy's taverns serve, therefore, as resting places for the weary, hungry, and thirsty trampers. Especially in Bai Penko's tavern is there mingling between the village "elite" (intelligentsia and richer peasants) and these Sofia visitors—"people of the world." The peasants laugh at the sight of the women dressed in winter in ski trousers or in shorts in summer. No one ever explains to the peasant that sport styles are extreme.

One evening in Bai Penko's tavern I was with a group of peasants who chortled when they saw a fat betrousered woman attempt unsuccessfully to get her loaded knapsack off. Turning to one of them I asked what he thought of such women, "Oh, we know what they are like," was the answer. When I pressed him further as to what he meant, he said: "They are the worst kind." Then I could not resist asking: "What would you do if your daughter came home dressed like that?" and the retort flared back, "Why, damn it, I'd kick her out of the house."

Estimates vary as to the number of *turisti*, as the Bulgarians call them, who pass through the village each year. Suffice it to say that on holidays and week ends there is a steady stream pouring through unless the weather is too forbidding. On August 28th, the Day of the Virgin, thousands flock to the monastery for the special services there as well as for the setting. Many of these hikers visit Dragalevtsy, whose square has been changed overnight into a lively market lined with temporary restaurants and a ramshackle merry-go-round.

369 The chief influence that these visitors have upon the villagers is to make them think that life in the city is as gay and carefree as the singing groups who

6: Shuster S-4 (no date) 1954 EI Europe

Bulgaria EEI

224

RELIGION BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN

653 nals, one of them the organ of the Communist-dominated
793 Synod, made propaganda at the government's behest. Every-
626 one who gave any indication of fidelity to the Christian creed
in its true significance and glory had to reckon with the possi-
bility that he would speedily be sentenced to one of the dreaded
prisons—Kolarovgrad, for example—which were always
crammed with the unfortunate victims of tyranny.

659 The Orthodox Church having been transformed into an ab-
798 ject lackey of the State, Communist wrath descended on the
religious minorities. Protestants were the first victims. Mis-
sionaries had come to Bulgaria from Turkey, and had estab-
lished schools which, despite wars and upheavals, gave a good
education to boys and girls. An exemplary woman introduced
the kindergarten system and trained native teachers. By the
close of World War I, hostility to Protestants had pretty largely
died down; and although the small congregations did not grow
rapidly they successfully maintained their identities. Their
pride and joy was the American College, situated near Sofia.
It was closed by the Nazis in 1942 and has not been reopened.
The work of the Y.M.C.A. and the Y.W.C.A. was suppressed at
the same time, and the Communist regime has not lifted the
prohibition.

691 The legislation adopted during February, 1949 (often re-
687 ferred to as the Canonical Purity Laws) contained a number
648 of provisions designed to render impossible any religious ac-
tivity under the auspices of a Church or institution with head-
quarters outside Bulgaria. It stipulated, for example, that any
Church or any clergyman desiring "canonical relations with
or aid or gifts from" institutions, organizations, or official per-
sonages abroad must secure permission in advance from the
Ministry for Foreign Affairs. It was presumably under this
legislation that fifteen Protestant pastors were brought to trial
for high treason during 1949. It was the first large-scale action

6: Shuster S-4 (no date) 1954 El Europe

Bulgaria EEI

SOVIETIZING THE BALKAN REGION

225

against Protestants in any satellite country, though to be sure Protestant Churches had suffered grievously in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland. The pastors, none of whom had occupied a position of eminence, were confronted with a lengthy list of charges. In particular they had, the Public Prosecutor contended, given military, economic, and political information to representatives of hostile foreign powers. They were also accused of having "spread malicious rumors about Russia." Those indicted—the Reverend Basil Ziapkov, for example—made confessions of the length desired and pleaded for mercy. The Court pronounced sentences of varying severity.

Manifestly this trial was also a blow struck at the prestige of the United States, from which most of the support for the Protestant congregations had come. Its primary effect was, no doubt, that the curtain was rung down on any hopes Bulgarian citizens might have that diplomatic intervention by the West would blunt the edge of the Soviet sickle, or that Washington could defend the interests of Americans in regions under Russian domination. How complete the resulting loss of morale was can be deduced from the official statements issued by the other Churches on the subject of the ordeal to which Protestantism had been subjected. The Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church declared, for example:

In accordance with our Church's traditional solicitude for fostering the aspirations of the people and maintaining loyalty to the State, the Holy Synod has always exhorted its clergy to look upon themselves as preachers of the Divine Word and as guardians of the Holy Spirit, and to remain aloof from all political influences hostile to the country and its people. We must add that the pastors of the Holy Orthodox Church have consistently obeyed our admonition. Not one of them has been prosecuted by the authorities on account of religious activities.

The Holy Synod strongly condemns all subversive activities carried